

Over the course of history, the Senate has debated voting rights many times and done what was necessary to take action, but rarely did our predecessors face the sort of malice that now confronts our democracy from within.

One final point. I mean, the arguments from the other side—they are saying: Federalize the elections. That is in the Constitution, that Federal elections can be determined by Federal legislation. That is what some of our great post-Civil War amendments were all about. That is what the history of voting rights legislation has been about. When State legislatures, for reasons often bigoted and racist, said people couldn't vote for one reason or another or stopped them from voting, the Congress stepped in. That is nothing new. It is unbelievable the arguments they come up with—just totally false. Totally false.

So as we hold this debate, I ask my colleagues to consider this question: If the right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy, then how can we Democrats permit a situation in which Republicans can pass voter suppression laws at the State level with only a simple majority vote but not allow the U.S. Senate to do the same? And I ask that of my Democratic colleagues—my Democratic colleagues.

This asymmetry cannot hold. If Senate Republicans continue to abuse the filibuster to prevent this body from acting, then the Senate must adapt. The Senate always has.

Robert C. Byrd, one of this Chamber's great traditionalists, acknowledged that Senate rules that seemed appropriate in the past "must be changed to reflect changed circumstances." Boy oh boy, do we have changed circumstances now with this abandonment of voting rights by the Republican Party and a willingness to let voters from one end of the country to the other be suppressed. As times change and circumstances evolve, the Senate must follow the suit of changed circumstances when necessary. So we are going to work towards that goal in the coming weeks.

To downplay the threat against our democracy is dangerous—dangerous. We have seen this in history forever. When people try to subvert democracy, when they use threats of violence to do so, if good people don't stand up, the democracy can wither. We cannot let that happen to our wonderful country.

There is no better way to heal the damage of January 6 than to act so that our constitutional order is preserved for the future. If we do not act to protect our elections, the horrors of January 6 will risk becoming not the exception but the norm. The stakes could not be higher. So we are going to move forward.

I yield the floor.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

REMEMBERING HARRY REID

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Mark Twain said that "the two most impor-

tant days in your life are the day you were born and the day you find out why."

Harry Reid grew up in the tiny mining town of Searchlight, NV. This politician class, which I am part of, likes to try to trace their roots to some humble beginning, some log cabin experience that they have overcome to reach public office. Harry didn't have to fake it. He was the third of four boys born in the Great Depression to a very poor family. His father was a hard-rock miner who battled alcoholism and was tortured by depression. His father took his own life. Harry came to the floor so many times, I can remember, and spoke of this issue of suicide and what it had meant to him as a boy growing up and what it meant to so many people across America.

His mother, a sweet, humble woman, helped to feed the family by doing laundry. The family home was a sight to behold—a tin-roofed, wooden cabin with no indoor plumbing, no hot water, and no telephone.

The day Harry came into this world was December 2, 1939. The day he had his Mark Twain moment and learned why he was put here happened 30 years later.

Against all odds, Harry had escaped the poverty of his childhood. He had put himself through law school at George Washington University here in Washington, DC, and he worked as a Capitol Police officer in this building to pay for his law school. After graduating, he returned to Nevada as a young lawyer and got involved in local politics.

Then came that Mark Twain moment. Harry attended a speech at the University of Nevada in Reno by a writer named Alex Haley. Haley's masterwork, "Roots," traced the story of one American family's triumphant rise over several generations from the horrors of slavery to freedom. Something that Alex Haley said that night hit Harry Reid like a thunderbolt. Haley said: "Be proud of who you are. You can't escape who you are."

Harry Reid recalled that moment in his farewell address to the Senate a little over 4 years ago. Harry said: "I walked out of that event that night a different person, a new man. From that day forward, I would always be Harry Reid from Searchlight."

As his favorite author, Mark Twain, might say, that was the day Harry Reid found out why he was born. He spent the rest of his life after that Alex Haley experience—almost half a century—climbing the political ladder in America to one of its highest rungs but using that power to help underdogs like the little boy from Searchlight, people like his parents, who struggled to feed their children, and others who felt the crushing hand of fate.

Harry Reid believed that the American family could come together as a government and make life better for one another. He believed that wise government decisions gave people an op-

portunity to overcome adversity. Some who grew up in poverty and hardship and escaped it are so seared by the pain of that life that they never want to look back. They develop a sort of myopia that seems to make it hard for them to even see the struggles of others. That was not Harry Reid.

As a young man, he was a tough middleweight boxer. As a lawmaker, he used his boxer's instincts to fight for others. He mastered the arts of dealmaking and lawmaking to help people who work hard and struggle.

He will go down in history as a Senate majority leader who helped deliver the Affordable Care Act—ObamaCare—the most important health and economic security advancement in America in 50 years. Thirty-one million Americans—1 out of every 10—have health insurance today because of Obama's leadership and Harry Reid making it a reality.

His work in the Senate, I witnessed personally, day by day by day. I can remember so many chapters, days when I thought it was over; there was no way. Here we were with exactly 60 votes, and our friend, a man we both loved, Teddy Kennedy was dying. We didn't know if we could get to the finish line in time while he was still alive, but Harry was determined. He had a bulldog tenacity to pass that bill. When he fought for the Affordable Care Act, Harry remembered his own life story of how his brother had been writhing in agony in bed with a broken leg because the family couldn't afford to take him to a doctor. Harry used his power to prevent other families from knowing that suffering.

After the great recession of 2009 robbed millions of Americans of their jobs, their homes, and their savings, Harry Reid, as majority leader, helped pass the landmark Dodd-Frank Wall Street reforms, to help prevent the abuses that led to that crash.

Nevada is home to many immigrants. Senator Harry Reid was a passionate advocate of legislation to fix our broken immigration system. We came to the House together, elected in 1982. He left just a few years later to come to the Senate, and I joined him a few years after that, so we had a friendship that dated back many years.

He knew my feelings about immigration, particularly about the DREAM Act. He wasn't sure of exactly what to do until he had two moments in life; one, when his wife Landra talked to him about that issue and how he had to do the right thing and the second was when he came to meet the immigrant people who were in his State of Nevada and hear their life stories. He promised me as my friend and as his whip to his majority leadership that he would bring the DREAM Act to the floor. He knew he had to block out the calendar to do it, and he knew the chances of success were limited, but he was determined to give me my day here on the floor of the Senate.

He brought the DREAM Act to the floor of the Senate in December of 2010.

We had a majority for it. It wasn't the only time we had majority, but, of course, we fell short of the 60-vote requirement under the filibuster.

Then Harry said: What can I do?

I told him: Harry, we have to reach out to our friend and former colleague Barack Obama. We have to ask him to do everything in his power to use his Executive Office to do what we cannot accomplish because of the filibuster.

So we wrote a letter, 22 of us Democrats, to Barack Obama, pleading with him to step in and help those wonderful young people who were just asking for a chance to be part of America's future. Harry's signature meant a lot as majority leader of the Senate. Barack Obama said he would help and created DACA, and hundreds of thousands of people have had their chance to be legally in America and be part of its future.

Harry Reid served in Congress longer than any Nevadan in history. He served in the Senate for 30 years. He was one of only three people to serve 8 years or more as Senate majority leader. He earned the tribute of our Nation, and it will be paid to him this coming weekend and the following week where his body will lie in state in the Rotunda in this Capitol that he loved.

Harry was my colleague, my leader, and my friend. Had he not called me personally and asked me to consider running for whip many years ago, I probably wouldn't have done it. But I knew that if he trusted me, I could offer my candidacy to the Senate in the hopes of being elected as whip. He had so many stories to tell. Hardly a day would go by where I wouldn't be in his office. He would tell some story about growing up, about his high school buddies, about his sports experience, about his wonderful wife Landra, about family experiences that always were colorful stories.

One involved one of his brothers who got into a fight in a bar in Nevada. His brother was outnumbered, and he was about to take a beating, when the front door of the tavern flung open and Cousin Jeff, a big bruiser of a man, walked in and took control, saving his brother from a beating. I was proud to be called "Cousin Jeff" by Harry. When he called me into political battles to be by his side so many times, it was an honor.

I was with him when he served as majority and minority whip. Harry was a man of extraordinary humility. He was the first to admit he wasn't much of an orator, and he would say that his good looks didn't win him into public office. But he had a genius for listening to people. He listened to the voices of our caucus, across the aisle, and across America. He managed often to find a way forward. He was a modest man. He didn't care who got the credit as long as the work was done.

The only thing that Harry Reid loved as much as the Senate and the promise of America was his family. Landra is such an extraordinary person, Harry's wife of 62 years. They started dating in

high school, and Harry knew that she was the "one." It took some convincing for her family to come around to that point of view, but they did, and they had a strong, loving relationship. Their children, Rory, Lana, Key, Leif, and Josh, and their 19 grandchildren were such a great source of pride to Harry more than anything.

I want to extend my sympathy to them on my behalf and behalf of my wife Loretta, as well as to the talented staff members who served Harry Reid for so many years, if any of them are still here in the Senate.

Above my desk is a portrait of President Lincoln. And above Harry's desk was a painting of Mark Twain. I was confused the first time I saw it because I pictured Mark Twain on the Mississippi, growing up in Missouri. I didn't quite understand the connection. In fact, Mark Twain spent the largest share of his life in Connecticut, where he and his wife raised their family. But Harry Reid said that it was while Samuel Clemens was working as a young newspaper reporter in Nevada that he became "Mark Twain." It was in Nevada where he first used that pseudonym.

Harry Reid rose to one of the highest positions in our government. He met with Presidents, Prime Ministers, even Monarchs, and this man from Searchlight helped craft and pass some of the most important legislation of our time. But like Mark Twain, it was in Nevada that Harry discovered why he was born. He fought for justice and fairness, and he always fought for the underdog. He was searching for those young people like himself who grew up in a hard-rock mining town under the toughest of circumstances and did their best. He wanted to give them the same fighting chance he had in life.

Harry fought the good fight. He finished the race. America is better for it. I will miss my friend.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRERSIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BIPARTISANSHIP

Mr. CORNYN. Happy New Year. It is good to see you and everybody back at the beginning of a new year after, I hope, a few days of respite and relaxation with friends and families and, hopefully, we have all had a chance to recharge our batteries now for the work ahead.

One of the great things about taking a few days off during the holidays is you get a chance to reflect on your work, your life, your family, what you are doing right, what you are doing wrong. That is what New Year's resolutions are all about, changing some of

those habits that maybe aren't serving us all that well.

But it is also to sort of reflect on the work here in the Senate. And I want to start by quoting one of the wisest men I knew, and that was my dad. My dad said—he had a whole list of aphorisms, most of which kind of embarrassed my brother and sister and me because they were so corny, but some of them were pretty shrewd and right on.

And one of them was that he said the hallmark of intelligence is to learn from your mistakes. The hallmark of intelligence is to learn from your mistakes.

And we are merely human and we all make mistakes—we all acknowledge that—but learning from our mistakes is perhaps the most important thing we can do to make progress, to get smarter, to learn from experience, and to do things better the next time.

I also thought of another wise man—you might call him a genius—Albert Einstein, who supposedly said—and I can't vouch for this, but maybe it is apocryphal; maybe it is accurate.

He said:

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. I was reflecting on this—these two definitions of intelligence and insanity as I thought about the year past and our 50-50 Senate. In 2020, we had a historic election, no doubt. Our Democratic colleagues captured not only the White House but the Senate and the House of Representatives.

But what is so amazing about that is the lessons that they learned from that 50-50 election in the Senate and a bare majority in the House was very different from what I think, historically, people have come to believe that that kind of message would send.

Ordinarily, you would think that—well, first of all, this is not the New Deal and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Franklin Delano Roosevelt had huge majorities in the House and the Senate when he passed the New Deal legislation, historic legislation by any count.

Conversely, in 2020, when President Biden was elected, the American people basically said we don't particularly trust either one of the major political parties so we are going to divide power equally in the Senate and give you a bare majority in the House, believing, I think, maybe intuitively, if not consciously, that that would force us to work together.

That is not necessarily the first instinct we have when we come here to the Senate or the Congress. We want what we want. We all run for election. We campaign on a platform saying, if elected, I am going to do this or that—and it is frustrating to not be able to do it.

But the wisdom of our Founders was that with the various checks and balances that we have on unilateral or partisan power, that when the voters